

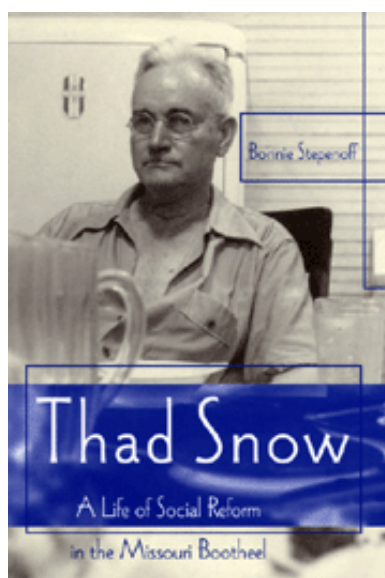
Guide to Thad Snow Papers

1921-1954

2 reels

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Filmed from the original manuscripts, on deposit at the
Western Historical Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri, St. Louis.



(photo taken from cover of Bonnie Stepenoff's book about Thad Snow,
Thad Snow: A Life of Social Reform).

Abstract:

Correspondence (1934-1949), Snow's writings (1921-1948), including letters to the editor, short stories, and speeches; and two scrapbooks of news clippings by and about Snow (1926-1954). Topics covered include personal reminiscences farming in Southeast Missouri, government farm policies, roads, flood control, politics, the 1939 Roadside Strike, World War II, and foreign policy. Filmed from originals on deposit at the Western Historical Collection, University of Missouri, St. Louis.

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Descriptive Overview

Provenance: Frances DeLaney donated her father's papers to the Joint Collection-St. Louis in April 1983.

Citation: Thad Snow papers, Special Collections and Archives, Southeast Missouri State University

Restrictions: Available on microfilm only

Other Relevant Collections: Southern Tenant Farmers' Union Papers, 1934-1970. [Microform], Kent Library Periodicals, 338.1 So88s

Other Locations: This register is a copy of the register created at the Western Historical Manuscript Collection, University of Missouri, St. Louis. The information found in this finding aid is copied from the Western Historical Manuscript Collection's website:

<http://www.umsi.edu/~whmc/guides/whm0088.htm>. For further information on Thad Snow, consult: I. Thad Snow, *From Missouri* (1954). 926.3/Sn6l.

Biographical Note

Thad Snow was born on November 1, 1881 in Greenfield, Indiana. His father was a moderately successful businessman and the first Republican elected to office in Hancock County.. Although many years his senior, Thad enjoyed fishing and swimming expeditions with James Whitcomb Riley, the Hoosier poet. Thad and his sister Lena, who was three years his senior, divided their time between reading great books and caring for a menagerie of pets. Her death at age 16, from a medical misdiagnosis of typhoid fever, was the first of several family tragedies to affect Thad deeply.

In his autobiography, From Missouri, Thad recalls that his teen years were spent on drinking, fishing, and having a good time. He was forced to skip his senior year of high school and leave Greenfield because of a potential paternity suit. The following year, he attended a medium-sized Methodist college, but transferred to the University of Michigan as a sophomore. Thad majored in philosophy and spent most of his time studying. By the spring of his senior year, he was on the verge of a physical breakdown. He left Ann Arbor in April 1904, and, in an effort to regain his strength, took up farming on land his father owned near Greenfield. He and Bess Jackson married that same year. They had two children, Hal and Priscilla.

Thad was a successful farmer in the rich soils of Indiana, but by 1910, the "pioneer urge" took him and his family to Southeast Missouri. They purchased a large tract of river bottom land in Mississippi County, across the river from Cairo, Illinois near the town of Charleston, Missouri. Snow coined the phrase "Swampeast Missouri" to describe the fertile area which, after draining and clearing, yielded fabulous crops of corn, alfalfa, wheat, soybeans and beginning in the 1920s, cotton. Bess Snow died suddenly in 1914; six years later Thad married Lila Simpson of Charleston. They had two daughters, Frances and Emily. As farmers, they suffered through droughts, floods and the farm depressions of the 1920s and 1930s. Thad even had to file for bankruptcy in 1930, but was able to hold on to his land and become a successful planter. His farm eventually included 1000 acres and 20 sharecropper families to work the land.

In 1937, Snow's second wife died after a long illness. Her death brought on another physical breakdown which left him nearly paralyzed for two years. Tragedy struck again in 1948 when Thad's son-in-law, John Hartwell Thompson, committed suicide after killing his wife Priscilla, their nine year

Biographical Note (cont.)

old daughter Anne, and Thad's youngest daughter, Emily. For the last seven years of his life, Thad suffered from poor health. Fortunately, his farm was so successful that he was able to give up full-time farming in the late 1930s and devote himself to reading, writing, and public service.

Snow was active in Southeast Missouri business and government organizations. He was a member of the agricultural bureau, the flood control committee, and the county relief committee. He was also a veteran promoter of the state highway system. Some of the first concrete roads were laid in Mississippi County, in large part due to his efforts. Nationally, he was a strong supporter of Henry Wallace, the Secretary of Agriculture (1933-1940), who authored much of the New Deal farm legislation. In 1935, Snow joined 4500 other farmers in a march on Washington to thank Roosevelt and Wallace personally for their help.

As a planter, Snow benefited from New Deal legislation, although he was concerned about tenant farmers, sharecroppers and day laborers who were often overlooked. H.L. Mitchell, co-founder of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union, credits him with inviting the union into Missouri. John L. Handcox, the Missouri organizer, paid tribute to Snow's role in a poem, "Out on Mr. Snow's Farm, or, The Kind of Man We Like to Meet." In January 1939, Missouri sharecroppers gained national publicity and support for their cause in a five-day roadside sit-down demonstration. Snow's sympathetic reporting of events and his behind the scenes aid to demonstrators embittered many local planters, who accused him of masterminding the whole thing. His critical analysis of government farm policy led to his appointment as an advisor to the Farm Security Administration on a project to relocate and rehabilitate dislocated farmtenants. In 1939, Wallace brought him to Washington, D.C. to lobby for a revised Farm Control Law which would insure an equitable distribution of farm payments among landowners, tenants, and sharecroppers. The coming of World War II and the subsequent rise in farm prices doomed the amendment. Snow continued his reform efforts as a member of the National Planning Associations' Agriculture Committee, which published his report, "A Farmer Looks at Fiscal Policy," in 1945. Following the war, he toured Australia on a fact-finding mission for the NPA.

It is as a writer, however, that Thad Snow is probably best remembered. He frequently contributed pieces to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch's "Letters from the People" column beginning in the early 1930s. Over the years, he addressed a variety of topics-politics, foreign affairs, farming, his family, economics and human nature. Even at his most critical, for example, in his condemnation of U.S. involvement in World War II, Snow softened his comments with satire and folksy humor. The Sage of Swampeast Missouri was often compared to Mark Twain and Will Rogers. In the early 1950s, Snow gave up farming altogether and moved to the Rose Cliff Hotel in Van Buren, Missouri to write his autobiography. From Missouri was published in November 1954, two months before his death from pneumonia on January 15, 1955.

Scope and Content

The Snow Papers are arranged into three main series: Correspondence, 1934-1949; Snow's Writings, 1921-1948, including letters to the editor, short stories, and speeches; and two Scrapbooks of newspaper articles by and about Snow, 1926-1954. Topics covered include personal reminiscences, farming in Southeast Missouri, government farm policies, roads, flood control, politics, the 1939 Roadside Strike, World War II, and foreign policy. The collection also contains photographs, personal possessions (wallet, savings book), a Fitzpatrick cartoon of Stalin autographed "To Thad from Uncle Joe", a grain settlement, and handbills. There are no family papers in the collection.

Series Descriptions

Series I: Correspondence, 1934-1940

The first five folders include general correspondence, arranged chronologically; the last three contain correspondence with three individuals. Some copies of Snow's outgoing letters are included.

Series II: Thad Snow's Writings, 1921-1948

Includes short stories, letters to the editor, speeches, reports, articles, and book reviews. Some of the material was published in the newspaper or included in his book From Missouri. Various drafts may be included. His writings have been arranged into nine categories:

Subseries 1: Family Reminiscences and Farm Life

Subseries 2: Farm Policies

Including analysis of farming in Southeast Missouri, flood control, government agricultural program, farming and business, farming and labor, sharecropper roadside strike, LaForge Project, and farmers and World War II.

Subseries 3: Fiscal Policies

Including relief, OPA regulations, economic planning, currency, tariffs and profits .

Subseries 4: Roads

Including the Curry Road Amendment and Highway Department politics and personnel.

Subseries 5: Foreign Policy

Including Snow's opposition to World War II, the atomic bomb, postwar policies.

Subseries 6: Famous People

Including Franklin D. Roosevelt, Leon Trotsky, Maxim Litvinov, Harry Truman, Herbert V. Evatt, Dorothy Thompson.

Subseries 7: Reflections

Includes pieces on change, fame, human habits, semantics, revolution.

Subseries 8: Book Reviews

Subseries 9: Notes and unfinished business

Series III: Memorabilia and Photographs

Series IV: Scrapbooks

The two original scrapbooks were unbound--many of the news clippings were transferred to acid free paper. This series contains copies of Snow's newspaper articles and letters to the editor (1926-1954), in the Charleston and St. Louis newspapers as well as in political periodicals. Snow was a frequent contributor to the "Letters to the People" column in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch from 1933 until his death. Copies of articles about Snow and reactions to his letters to the editor are also included. Topics include farming and economics, labor unions, the 1937 Flood, the 1937 Emerson Electric Strike, the 1939 Roadside Strike, World War II, government planning, politics and foreign affairs.

Container Listing

Series I	Correspondence, 1934-1949	
Folder 1	Correspondence <i>Topics and individuals include:</i> <i>William R. Amberson, conducted study of effect of Agricultural Adjustment Administration on sharecroppers</i> <i>Anderson, Farm Security Administration</i> <i>The Bald-Headed Sharecropper (Owen Whitfield)</i> <i>The Bankhead-Jones Bill</i> <i>Ralph Coghlan, <u>Post-Dispatch</u> editor</i> <i>Cotton Control – quotas</i> <i>Farm Security Administration (FSA)</i> <i>Joe Harlan, <u>Post-Dispatch</u></i> <i>Edward Petrikovitsch, secretary, German Liberty Union</i> <i>Towner Phelan, assistant vice-president, St. Louis Union Trust</i> <i>Charles G. Ross, <u>Post-Dispatch</u></i> <i>Sharecroppers</i> <i>Southern Tenant Farmers' Union</i> <i>Harry S. Truman, senator</i> <i>Orville Zimmerman, representative, 10th District of Missouri</i>	1934-1938
Folder 2	Correspondence <i>Topics and individuals include:</i> <i>Cotton Control - Labor Policy</i> <i>Cotton Laborers Bill</i> <i>I.W. Duggan, Department of Agriculture</i> <i>Leon Trotsky, Russian revolutionary</i> <i>Henry Wallace, Secretary of Agriculture</i>	1939-1940
Folder 3	Correspondence <i>Topics and individuals include:</i> <i>American Federation of Labor</i> <i>C.B. Baldwin, representative of the FSA</i> <i>Phil Beck, regional administrator for FSA</i> <i>FSA - Land Purchase and Personnel in Southeast, Missouri</i> <i>Laforge Project</i> <i>Lend-Lease</i> <i>Pacifism</i> <i>Patriotism</i> <i>Franklin D. Roosevelt, President, United States of America</i> <i>Sharecroppers</i> <i>Southern Tenant Farmers' Union</i> <i>John Stewart, Southeast, Missouri area director, FSA</i> <i>Wade Tucker, director of Organizers' Association of Farm Laborers, Sharecroppers and Tenants of Southeast, Missouri</i>	1941
Folder 4	Correspondence <i>Topics and individuals include:</i> <i>Ralph Bladgen, managing editor, St. Louis <u>Star-Times</u></i> <i>Stuart Chase</i>	1942-1944

Series I	Correspondence, 1934-1949	
Folder 4	Correspondence (cont.) <i>Topics and individuals include:</i> <i>Ralph Coghlan, <u>Post-Dispatch</u></i> <i>Irving Dilliard, <u>Post-Dispatch</u></i> <i>R.L. Duffus, <u>New York Times</u></i> <i>FSA - Land Purchase and Personnel in Southeast, Missouri</i> <i>Fitzpatrick, cartoonist, <u>Post-Dispatch</u></i> <i>Ferd Gottlieb, <u>Post-Dispatch</u></i> <i>Jehovah's Witnesses</i> <i>LaForge Project</i> <i>Jean Lightfoot, <u>Post-Dispatch</u></i> <i>Morris H. Rubin, editor, <u>The Progressive</u></i> <i>John Stewart, area director, FSA</i> <i>Orville Zimmerman, representative, Missouri 10th District</i>	1942-1944
Folder 5	Correspondence <i>Topics and individuals include:</i> <i>Army Corps of Engineers</i> <i>L.T. Berthe, consulting engineer</i> <i>Colonel H.C. Gee, chief of engineers, Army Corps of Engineers</i> <i>Flood Control</i> <i>L.H. Foote, colonel, district engineer</i> <i>Paul C. Jones, representative</i> <i>New Madrid Floodway, draining, Birds' Point</i> <i>Orville Zimmerman, representative, Missouri 10th District.</i> <i>Irving Dillard</i>	1945-1949
Folder 6	Correspondence with Sam Bledsoe, official in the Southern Division Adjustment of Agricultural Administration <i>Subjects include:</i> <i>The Atomic Bomb</i> <i>C.B. Baldwin, FSA</i> <i>Chester Davis</i> <i>Farming</i> <i>Farm Labor Amendment</i> <i>Farm Security Administration</i> <i>Parisius, Ford production administrator John Stewart, area director, FSA</i> <i>Harry Truman, vice-president</i> <i>Henry Wallace, Secretary of Agriculture World War II</i> <i>Orville Zimmerman, representative, Missouri 10th District</i>	1939-1946
Folder 7	Correspondence from Martin Lechner, sec., Socialist Party of Missouri <i>Topics include:</i> <i>CIO</i> <i>1937 Emerson Electric Sit-down Strike</i> <i>FBI</i> <i>Sharecroppers</i>	1937-1945

Series I Correspondence, 1934-1949		
Folder 7	Correspondence from Martin Lechner, sec., Socialist Party of Missouri <i>Topics include:</i> <i>Socialism</i> <i>World War II</i>	1937-1945
Folder 8	Correspondence from John T. Stewart, Southeast, Missouri area dir. FSA <i>Topics and individuals include:</i> <i>The Atomic Bomb</i> <i>C.B. Baldwin, administrator, FSA</i> <i>Phil Beck, regional director, FSA</i> <i>Delmo Labor Homes</i> <i>FSA - Personnel in Southeast, Missouri</i> <i>Labor Camps</i> <i>Laforge Project</i> <i>Isham Puckett, farmer, evicted from LaForge Rural Rehabilitation Project</i> <i>Harris Rodgers Security Farms</i> <i>Sharecroppers</i> <i>Wade Tucker, director of Organizers, Association Farm Laborers, Sharecroppers and Tenants, Southeast, Missouri</i> <i>Wardell Negro Camp World War II</i>	1942-1945
Series II Thad Snow's Writings, 1921-1948		
Folder 9	James Whitcomb Riley	1944
Folder 10	Mr. Hoover, My Mother and the Empty Match Box	
Folder 11	Old Black Cow	1937
Folder 12	The Bull and 1, several versions	1947
Folder 13	Thad Snow Tells About His Bird Dog	Undated
Folder 14	Dove Hunting	Undated
Folder 15	The Colporter	Undated
Folder 16	Obit for "Farmer"	Undated
Folder 17	Shine, or Swampeast Missouri Nocturne, or How The Chicken Thief Escaped	Undated
Folder 18	The Report of Jeremiah Thomas Abernathy of New York--The Truth About Mississippi County	1921
Folder 19	Opinions of a farmer	1923
Folder 20	History of Swampeast, Missouri	Undated
Folder 21	Old Man River Speaks	1937
Folder 22	Mississippi River Flood	1937
Folder 23	Statement before officials of North Central Region, New Madrid, on the Farm Program	1937
Folder 24	The Farmer's Institute and the Harvester Company, or Is This Farmer's Mind Becoming Affected?	1938
Folder 25	Ginners	Undated
Folder 26	Farm Programs	Undated
Folder 27	Labor Policy in Cotton Control	Undated
Folder 28	Cotton Control Program	Undated
Folder 29	Planters and Farm Legislation	Undated

Series II Thad Snow's Writings, 1921-1948

Folder 30	Farm Control after five years	Undated
Folder 31	Cooperation between government and business on farm control (International Harvester Machines on Credit)	1937-1938?
Folder 32	Sharecropper Roadside Strike, several drafts	1939
Folder 33	A Tribute to a Crusader, Wade Tucker	1942
Folder 34	LaForge Project	1942
Folder 35	Speech before organized labor regarding attitudes of farmers	1943
Folder 36	Roosevelt's proposal for farm subsidies	1944
Folder 37	Proposed Farm Bureau Adjustment Act	Undated
Folder 38	Planning for agriculture	Undated
Folder 39	Swamp east Missouri	1944
Folder 40	Draft deferments for farmers	1944?
Folder 41	Viola and Annie (the welfare system)	1942
Folder 42	OPA Regulations and Snow's violations	1943
Folder 43	Planning, (speech to National Planning Association)	1943
Folder 44	National Planning Association, A Farmer Looks at Fiscal Policy	1945
Folder 45	Walter and Paper Money	Undated
Folder 46	The Manure Fork (tariffs)	Undated
Folder 47	The Profit System	Undated
Folder 48	The Road Amendment	1938?
Folder 49	Curry Road Amendment	1948
Folder 50	Reflections on the highway department, road building, politics and personnel	Undated
Folder 51	Thoughts on war preparedness, Lindbergh	1940
Folder 52	Reflections on war hysteria	Undated
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Folder 55	Roosevelt's war policy and the reduction in war hysteria	1940?
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Folder 58	Tolstoy's War and Peace and Roosevelt's policies,	1941? May
Folder 59	Pearl Harbor and Free Speech	1942 April
Folder 60	World War II, U.S. objectives, and free speech, 2 drafts	1942?
Folder 61	Bird Hunting and World War II	1942?
Folder 62	What are we fighting for, letter from H.L. Jenkins and reply	1943-1944
Folder 63	In reply to Arthur Jobsor on Snow's silence during the war	Undated
Folder 64	Atomic Bomb	Undated
Folder 65	Henry Wallace's Madison Square Speech	1945?
Folder 66	Our Foreign Policy, several drafts	1946
Folder 67	Roosevelt, the Constitution, and the New Deal	1937
Folder 68	Leon Trotsky	1939
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Folder 70	Harry Truman	1944
Folder 71	Herbert V. Evatt	Undated
Folder 72	Dorothy Thompson	Undated
Folder 73	Speech to the American Society of Civil Engineers	Undated
Folder 74	Change and understanding	Undated
Folder 75	Reflections on a Quaint Habit	1937
Folder 76	Maury's Riot, San Antonia	1939?
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Folder 78	On fame and advice to friends	1939
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Folder 80	Review of Robert Duffus' <u>The Innocents at Cerdo</u>	1944
Folder 81	Review of Train's <u>Yankee Lawyer, the Autobiography of Ephraim Tutt</u>	1943
Folder 82	Notes and unfinished business	undated

Series III Memorabilia and Photographs

Folder 83	Three handbills for talk by Owen Whitfield and William Tanner and Dr. Herbert Marshall and poster for the Associated Farm Laborers, Sharecroppers and Tenants of Southeast Missouri, signed Wade Tucker	1939, 1941,
Folder 84	Wallet, savings pass book and grain settlement	1959
Folder 85	Snow's 1941 Fitzpatrick Cartoon of Stalin, signed 'To Thad, Uncle Joe'	undated
Folder 86	Photographs (7), of Thad Snow, Emily and Frances Snow, Owen and Zella Whitfield and Snow's Windmill	undated

Series IV Scrapbooks

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